Could this be I, this bleary, shambling, hunted-looking tramp?

"I Didn't Order These!"

By DEEMS TAYLOR

IT was a sign in the showcase at the side of the door that first attracted my attention. The sign read: "Photos for Passports and Chauffeurs Lisences a Specialty. We Treat You RIGHT." After all, I thought to myself, why not go in? This place was as good as any, and I might as well have it over and done with. Besides, I had already conceived a liking for the proprietor. We had something in common. He spelled "licenses" the way I have always wanted to.

I studied the showcase again. Under the sign were three small portraits of unpleasant-looking men, presumably chauffeurs. Also, there were pictures of two babies. The first was sitting in a bowl, and wore a simple but becoming one-piece garment, cut low and trimmed with a large safety-pin. The second was lying flat upon its stomach, and wore nothing at all. A card underneath read, "This Style 3 for $1." I blushed and entered.

The photographer must have been expecting me. That is the only way I can explain the warmth of his greeting. Of course, I had spoken to several friends, in a casual way, about going to have this picture taken, and evidently the news had leaked out. You know how people are about repeating things. At any rate, he smiled cordially, commented upon the remarkably satisfactory state of the weather, and hazarded the opinion that I wanted a photograph.

"I want," I said, "a photograph. A license photograph."

"One?"

"One. How much are they, and when can I get it?"

"Fifty cents apiece. Day after tomorrow."

This was disconcerting. Somehow I had had an idea that one went into a photograph gallery, laid down a quarter, and came away clutching a finished portrait of one's self. Fifty cents seemed an overlarge sum to pay for one small picture, especially a picture that was going to be used for identificatory rather than decorative purposes. It wasn't as though I were planning to hang it up in our living-room to amuse callers, or mail it, autographed, to an admirer. I said as much.

He continued to smile. "Or you can have half a dozen for two dollars," he remarked, cheerfully.

I made a rapid mental calculation. If I bought six, I would be paying only 33.333333+ cents apiece. That was decidedly more like.

"Or," he added, "a dozen for three dollars."

I made another calculation—a more rapid one, since there were no decimals involved. By buying a dozen I would bring the price down to a quarter apiece, the very amount I had figured on paying in the first place. I stole a glance at the photographer. He was still smiling, apparently oblivious to the fact that he had just quoted me a price that gave me "half off," as the saying is. Still, that was his lookout. Business is business, say I. It behooved me to snap him up before he saw his ridiculous error.

"I'll take a dozen," I said, with assumed indifference.

"Yes, sir. Name and address, please. Three dollars, please."

AND now, subtly, his manner underwent a change. Before, it was I who had been master of the situation—had I not compelled him to cut his price in half? But money had passed between us, and now it was I who followed, he who led.

"Step this way!" he directed, crisply. "You'll want to brush up a bit."

I didn't, but I stepped obediently up to a mirror, and looked in. Now, I am not a vain man, but I have my pride. I flatter myself that my appearance, while hardly ravishing, is at least not repellant. And I try to be a neat dresser, though, perhaps, not a snappy one. But when I looked into that mirror I recoiled. Could this be I, this bleary, shambling, hunted-looking tramp? Too late I realized that I should have shaved that morning. My coat was rumpled, my collar was utterly wrong, my hair wanted cutting, and my tie was obviously in need of drastic revision downward. I pawed feebly at my back hair, and then, bent and broken, turned away, hoping to slink out unnoticed. But it was not to be. Upon my ears fell the inexorable voice of the photographer.

"No; in here," it said.

When I had my last regular photograph taken, back in 1904, the photographer had kept his camera in a nice, airy, greenhouse sort of place, with interesting little roller shades running up and down the glass walls. Science had evidently made great strides since then, for the place into which I was now ushered was nothing at all like a greenhouse. It was more like a college fraternity lodge-room. There was the same absence of windows and atmosphere, and the same sense of something important being about to take place which you knew probably wouldn't turn out to be very important, after all. An evil-looking green light, burning in a glass tube, added materially to the ghastliness of the general effect.

"Now, if you'll sit there"—he motioned vaguely toward a high stool. I clambered up and sat grimly waiting, while the photographer, wrapping his head in a black shawl, disappeared behind the camera.

"Now, face this way! No; not so much. That's right, now, chin up! More! More yet. That's right. Now, hold that!"

I held it. He came out and did something mysterious with a plate-holder.

"Ready, now! A little more cheerful, please."

I essayed a ghastly smirk.

"Hold it! St-e-a-d-y. Good!"

I started to climb down, hopefully. But he waved me back.

"Do you know," he said, meditatively, "I believe I'll take a couple more of you. You're an unusually good sitter."

"Well," I thought, "that is decent of him! So I'm a good sitter? Why, this being photographed isn't so bad, after all. I suppose there *is* something a little out of the ordinary in my appearance. Now that I think of it, several of my friends have mentioned the fact. I'm probably not so bad-looking, at that. Really, now, the fellow sems to have taste."

He suddenly ran behind the camera and pushed it violently toward me, stopping only when the lens was practically pointing down my throat. I opened my mouth to say "ah-h," but he stopped me.

"No; mouth closed. Face the camera! Chin up. More. Hold that! A little more cheerful, please! St-e-a-d-y. Good! No; wait a minute. Side face, now. Look up a little! Chin up! More. Hold that! A little more cheerful, please. St-e-a-d-y. Good! That's all."

It was over. I could go out into the world, out into the sunshine, serene in the knowledge that the picture had been taken, and that I was an unusually good sitter.

ON Wednesday I returned. The photographer remembered me almost immediately, and brought out the photographs. I surveyed them with mild interest.

"Wait!" he said. "I have something to show you." He dived behind the counter and brought up two large proofs.

"There!" He beamed triumphantly. "What do you think of those?"

I looked at them. Yes; they were indubitably I. But what a changed I, what an idealized, transcendentalized I! Gone were the stray tufts of hair that are wont to stick out pleasantly from behind my ears; gone was the small mole on my forehead; gone were the lines that time and suffering and heavy thinking have graven deep in my rather interesting face. Upon that revised and expurgated countenance was a tolerant smile, Buddha-like and inscrutable. Some one had been at work on that face, some one who objected violently to my usual features and who had resolved to do what he could to make a decent job of them.

"There!" He beamed triumphantly. "What do you think of those?"

"But," I said feebly, "I didn't order these."

"I assume all the risk," he added reproachfully. "The loss is mine if you don't take them."

I hesitated. Here was a crisis. Of course the fellow had no business to go taking pictures of me that I hadn't ordered. On the other hand, the mischief was done, and it was obvious from his tone that if I didn't jump into the breach and order a dozen or so his entire business would simply be thrown into bankruptcy. Could I stand by and see him lose the savings of a lifetime? Hang it, no! A man has to do the decent thing. I made the only remark possible.

"How much are they?" I asked.

He grew confidential. "Well, I'll tell you. These are our regular art panel folders, on genuine platinum paper. But on the other hand, I've already got the negative, and it's no use to me unless you order some, is it?"

He laughed. But there was a forced note in it. Obviously, I had him at my mercy.

"So, seeing as I have the negative, I'm going to make you a special rate. I'm going to let you have a dozen of these—" his voice sank, and he bent over and eyed me significantly—"for fif-teen dollars."

I moistened my dry lips. That is what people do, isn't it, when they feel as I felt?

"But I haven't fifteen dollars with me," I managed to articulate.

"Oh, that's all right," he interrupted hastily. "I know you're good for it. I know I can trust a man of your standing. Just pay anything you like, now, as a deposit, and pay the rest when you come to get the pictures."

I made one last attempt. "I have only five dollars," I muttered hoarsely.

"Five dollars T-h-a-t's all right. Certainly. Thank you. Name and address, please."

THE pictures will be ready on Tuesday. But I shall not call for them in person. I have given Marsh the ten dollars, and have asked him if he'd mind stopping to get them on his way home. Five years ago Marsh did me an evil turn. He has long since forgiven me, but I have not forgotten. And now my hour has struck. He is going to call for those pictures, and I know what is going to happen to him.

He is going to sit for one dozen license photographs of himself, which he cannot possibly use, and for one dozen art panel folders on genuine platinum paper, which he emphatically will not want. And he is going to pay eighteen dollars for the privilege.

SWEEPINGS FROM INKPOT ALLEY

BY TANSY M'NAB

IT is about ten years ago, we believe, since Mr. Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor, got in trouble about angels. Mr. Borglum had been sculping some angels for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and all was going well until some acute official of the Cathedral discovered with horror that Mr. Borglum's angels were of the gentler sex. The cathedral authorities showed conclusively that the perfect angel is never a lady, though of course not even a bishop would dare maintain that a lady may not be a perfect angel.

These lady angels who have no real standing are familiar to us as winged maidens in flowing nighties hovering above cradles principally in soap lithographs and 39-cent engravings. According to H. G. Wells, they were originally made in Germany. Possibly they were the precursors of the Zeppelins.

Among contemporary writers of fiction Mr. Wells, James Stephens and Anatole France are conspicuous among those who have attempted to depict angels. None of them fell into Mr. Borglum's error, though M. France permits one of his angels temporarily to assume the shape of a woman.

Mr. Wells's angel, in "The Wonderful Visit," is brought to earth by a charge of swan shot fired by the vicar of Siddermorton, who has a taste for ornithology. Mr. Wells tells us:

'The vicar stood aghast, with his smoking gun in his hand. It was no bird at all, but a youth with an extremely beautiful face, clad in a robe of saffron and with iridescent wings, across whose pinions great waves of color, flushes of purple and crimson, golden green and intense blue, pursued one another as he writhed in his agony. Never had the vicar seen such gorgeous floods of color; not even stained glass windows, not the wings of butterflies, not even the glories of crystals seen between prisms could compare with them. Twice the angel raised himself, only to fall over sideways again. Then the beating of the wings diminished, the terrified face grew pale, the floods of color abated, and suddenly with a sob he lay prone.

"'Dear me!' said the vicar. 'I had no idea.' He came forward cautiously. 'Excuse me,' he said. 'I am afraid I have shot you.'"

The vicar took the angel home and tied up his injured wing. Also he clothed him in a suit of cast-off black, because the curate's wife and daughters, who had been playing tennis in the garden, had caught a glimpse of him in his short, saffron robe and suffered a shock to their sense of propriety.

The curate and his wife could not become reconciled to the angel's presence in the vicarage. The village doctor was suspicious of him. The villagers disliked him as a foreigner. The small boys threw stones at him because his folded wings under his coat made him look like a hunchback. But old Lady Hammergallow, who lived chiefly on burgundy and the scandals of the village, took him up because he could evoke divine sounds from the vicar's violin. She had him in to play at one of her afternoons. But it was discovered he could not read a note of music. And his manners were atrocious. In fact, he had no manners at all. He actually treated a serving maid as if she were one of Lady Hammergallow's guests. Only fawncy! The dejected vicar lead him home in disgrace.

But worse was to come. The angel could not understand why certain persons had to plough all day in the hot sun while the vicar and Sir John Gotch sat at ease. The vicar loaned him a book on political economy, but somehow that did not help. It was rumored that he was making socialistic speeches in the village. Moreover, he tore up a lot of barbed wire that fenced in Sir John Gotch's estate, under the impression that it was some malignant plant. A little girl had torn her hand on it. Finally, in a fit of angelic rage, he nearly killed Sir John.

Of course, jail loomed ahead for the angelic visitor. Disconsolate, he went into the vicar's garden at night and tried to fly away. But his wings had shrunk. He fell to the ground weeping and Delia, the vicar's little maidservant, came out and comforted him. He had fallen in love with Delia. She seemed, excepting the vicar, to be the only person he had met who possessed tenderness and sympathy.

Mrs. Hinijer, the vicar's housekeeper, happened to see the scene in the garden. She was shocked. She believed the angel's intentions were not honorable. She gave notice.

In this crisis the vicarage caught fire. (Mr. Wells loves to solve his problems with a conflagration.) Delia dashed into the burning house to rescue the angel's fiddle. The angel rushed in after her. The flames shot up in a blinding glare. "A rush of music, like the swell of an organ, wove into the roaring of the flames." Little Hetty Penzance saw two figures with wings flash upward and vanish.

James Stephens's angels, in "The Demi-Gods," find much less difficulty in their mortal environment. The Irishmen in the book accept them as a matter of course. They believe in angels, while in England there is probably no one, with the exception of Sir James Barrie and Mr. Chesterton, who would credit them even on sight. This is not that Irishmen are naturally more credulous than Englishmen. To an Irishman no phenomenon could be more unnatural and absurd than the government of Ireland. It is easy for him to believe in the reality of fairy castles because he has to believe in the reality of Dublin Castle. Angels are credible beings to him because the Lord Lieutenant and his executive household are already there, living manifestations of a stranger diabolism.

Mr. Stephens gives us three angels. One was an old angel, wise and childish and kind; the second, dark and determined, looked like a man of forty; and the third was "young and swift and beautiful." All three were dark, with dark eyes. Mr. Wells's angel had brown eyes.

This must be a sad blow to Mr. Arthur Brisbane, who has demonstrated in his editorials time and again that all persons who amount to anything have blue eyes. The proof of this is that people like Queen Victoria, Shakespeare, Sir Walter Raleigh and Mr. Hearst are numbered among the blue-eyed folk. But angels, it seems, are different.

Mr. Stephens's three angels, in their beautiful jewelled robes, fly to earth and join the campfire of Patsy MacCann, an itinerant beggar and petty thief. They wish to travel the roads with MacCann. But he is a cautious man.

"What would the priest say," he whispers to his daughter, "if he heard we were stravaiging the country with three big buck angels, and they full of tricks maybe?"

But his daughter persuades him to take the angels along. They put an unwonted strain on the commissariat.

"Do you know," said Patsy, "that the hardest thing in the world is to get the food, and a body is never done looking for it? . . . We'll have to search for what we eat to-night, and in the morning we'll have to look again for more of it, and the day after that, and every day until we are dead we'll have to go on searching for the food."

"I would have thought," said the eldest angel, "that of all problems food would be the simplest in an organized society."

Again this smacks of radicalism or socialism. But Mr. Stephens is too fine an artist to let his angels bore us. They went wandering through the country with Patsy MacCann and his daughter, meeting with adventures. It was their privilege to be present at the second mortal death of Brien O'Brien, most engaging of scoundrels. They made the acquaintance of the thin man and Eileen ni Cooley and Bill the Music and many others. And the youngest angel fell in love with the beggarman's daughter, Mary MacCann.

Here is the picture of Mary. There may be better pen portraits in books, but we have not seen them.

"She was big in build and bone, and she was beautiful and fearless. Framed in a rusty shawl, her face leaped out instant and catching as a torch in darkness; under her clumsy garments one divined a body to be adored as a revelation; she walked carelessly as the wind walks, proudly as a young queen trained in grandeur. She could leap from where she stood, as a wildcat that leaps terribly from quietude; she could run as a deer runs and pause at full flight like a carven statue. Each movement of hers was complete and lovely in itself; when she lifted a hand to her hair the free attitude was a marvel of composure; it might never have begun and might never cease; it was solitary and perfect; she had that beauty that raises the mind of man to an ecstasy which is murderous if it be not artistic; and she was so conscious of her loveliness that she could afford to forget it, and so careless that she had never yet used it as a weapon or a plea."

Small wonder that the youngest angel, when the time came for them to leave, tore his beautiful wings asunder and stayed with Mary MacCann.

M. France's angels, in "The Revolt of the Angels," are incorrigibly Gallic; that is, they are interested in philosophy and revolutions and women. They seem more human than angelic. In fact, they are not much more than lay figures on which M. France hangs his antitheistic satire and through which he indulges in his love for roughhouse. Any Frenchman who wrote such a book two hundred years ago would have been burnt at the stake. Any Frenchman who could write such a book to-day would be assured of his place in the French Academy. It is not a book for the tired business man, or for babes and sucklings.

M. France provides a liberal number of angels. Three hundred of them attend a revolutionary meeting in Paris. Among them are those who have become printers, gardeners and musicians; a banker and a Japanese angel, who overcomes a huge policeman in a street brawl by means of jiu-jitsu. The banker angel runs true to his earthly type. He advocates the revolution in heaven—and invests in munition plants on earth.

It is a startling fact that the French angels of M. France, the English angel of Mr. Wells and the Irish angels of Mr. Stephens are all alike deplorably radical. They consort with riff-raff, beggars and grisettes and such. Their manners would profoundly shock Mrs. Humphry Ward. Their economic and social ideas resemble more closely those of Max Eastman and Big Bill Haywood than those of, let us say, former President Taft. They would cause grave misgivings among respectable idealists like Senator Murray Crane and Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler. These angels, in short, are a ubiquitous lot—and we wish one would visit America. Perhaps he could interpret Mr. Wilson's lectures.

We wish also that some of our American fiction writers would try to do an angel. Most interesting would be an American angel, done by Ernest Poole or Stephen Whitman or possibly Harry Leon Wilson. Gouverneur Morris might have done one for us ten years ago, but alas, Mr. Morris has been writing kissing stories too long.